2: Marshall G-5 (1870) 1873 Toda

CHAP. XXII.

pointing to an interesting stage in Turanian progress; that whence various ancient creeds have sprung and ramified.

The Toda religion has not the slightest sympathy with idolatry, nor does it pay attention to natural objects, as trees or rivers: to birds, beasts, or reptiles: nor to the elements. No offerings to a God, whether of flesh—human or animal—or fruit of the soil, are made: no human victims and no self-torture. It is not that they have risen above such prejudices; they seem to me rather, not to have attained the stage when religious observances commence. Circumcision is not performed. The memory of forefathers is piously regarded, but the feeling has not expanded through veneration into any form of hero-worship.

They believe in transmigration, but whether of soul or body probably few have formed very distinct ideas. The funeral service seems to favour the idea that the transition of the soul is the dogma which, though unexpressed, lies like an instinct in their minds: coupled with the idea that the soul is a living solid, a real duplicate Toda requiring food. But the whole scheme of their observances is so illogical, that it is impossible to deduce therefrom any clear definition of a creed.

Endeavour has been made in Chapters VIII. and IX. to convey, in brief terms, the reasons for my confidence, that sobriety, and general abstinence from exciting meat diet, are largely natural to this people. The practice certainly forms at present no part of their religious observance.

I would place the state of their belief in witchcraft and the work of demons and other unseen agencies, somewhat on a parallel with that of their knowledge of Divine work. Neither one nor the other, troubles them much. Perhaps I may best define the relative feeling, by saying, that they fear the former and hope most of the latter. Though they do, to a certain extent, practise demonolatry, they do not do so with the enthusiasm of other primitive races of South India. Indeed I had not one opportunity of witnessing feats of exorcism.